
ON THE
HISTORY AND MYSTERY
OF THOSE CALLED
SACRAMENTS
OF THE NEW TESTAMENT
JACOB POST

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HISTORY AND MYSTERY
OF

(THOSE CALLED)

THE SACRAMENTS

SHEWING THEM TO BE JEWISH INSTITUTIONS
AND NOT ORDINANCES, APPOINTED BY CHRIST,
TO BE OBSERVED IN HIS CHURCH.

By JACOB POST.

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P R E F A C E.

The following observations on those called the Sacraments of water Baptism, and the Supper of bread and wine, are offered for the candid consideration of the reader, as the Author's apology for declining the use of them. The critical scholar will, no doubt perceive, much in the following pages, which betray a lack of elegant literature, as well as an ignorance of the art of book-making.

Whilst acknowledging these deficiencies, the consequence of a plain eleemosynary education, the writer has been sincerely desirous of stating facts according to the evidence of historic truth, and has endeavoured to express his own sentiments in plain English language, so that no one need be at a loss to understand his mean-

ing ; beyond this, he claims no indulgence, but submits his opinion to the test of Holy Scripture, and to the honest, unprejudiced inquirer after the mind of Christ, as unfolded therein.

Whilst claiming for the conscientious non-ritualist, a place in the universal church of Christ, the writer feels, at the same time, in perfect charity with that large majority of Christian professors, who deem it needful for them to observe the outward rites, called Sacraments, under one or other, of the various forms now in use.

It is however, some consolation to him, in his singularity of opinion, to remember, that TRUTH and her followers, were always a small minority in the world, and that, to his own Master, and not to public opinion, he must stand or fall in the Great day of account.

J. P.

Islington, 1846.



INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

THE term sacrament appears to have been borrowed from heathen Rome, and was transferred into the christian church in the dark ages of superstition. The word sacrament, is nowhere to be found in the inspired writings, indeed, its origin is adverse to the peaceable principles of christianity, for it was a name formerly given to the military oath administered to those who entered the Roman legions. Inconsistent as is the term (on the ground of its origin) with the doctrines promulgated by the "Prince of Peace," the writer's controversy is not *now*, regarding the appellation ; but, with the assumed obligation, that all who claim to be called christians, must be baptised with water, and partake of bread and wine as an act of devotion.

When bishops and priests, and many other orders of ecclesiastics, had multiplied among men, the pope called a council on church affairs of the most eminent amongst them, which met at Trent, a city of Germany, and had its several sittings between the years 1545

and 1563. This convention, after much debate and many arguments, (on this subject among others) came to the conclusion, that there were *seven* sacraments to be observed as such, in the christian church, giving as a reason, that seven was a perfect number, there being seven days in a week, seven excellent virtues, seven deadly sins, seven planets, and so forth. These are the names of them, viz. : Baptism—Confirmation—the Sacrament of the Altar, or the Eucharist—Extreme Unction — Penance — Absolution, and Ordination. This having been agreed, they proceeded to decide, how far these so called sacraments, conferred grace on the recipients. A wide difference arose on this explanation ; many long and angry disputes resulted, until the Pope interfered to restrain the turbulent fury of the assembly.

Then followed the heats and fierce disputes between those who held the doctrine of transubstantiation (the most numerous, and, at length, the prevailing party) and those who maintained that of consubstantiation, whilst some others resolved the bread and wine into their simple elements. After this manner, these rites, under the names of sacraments, came to be instituted ; and of such were their founders.

In the several reigns of Edward VI., Elizabeth, James I., and Charles I., no less than five prayer-books, or royal formula of devotion (all differing

from each other) were enacted for the people's use ; and in the reign of Charles II., another revision took place, thus shewing, that when men intrude between the soul and its Maker, they manifest their incompetency for the sacred office, and by putting forth their hand to the work unbidden, they incur the displeasure of Him of whom the apostle declared, "He is not worshipped with men's hands, as though He needed any thing." In the last "Prayer Book," which was issued so long ago as in the time of Charles II., it is said, that of the old service, "many things are left out, whereof some are untrue, some uncertain; some vain and superstitious." In the like liberty, the Reformers, in that measure of light with which they were gifted, having, from time to time, carefully considered, amongst other subjects, the grounds for observing these so-called sacraments, had decided that there were only two of the seven deserving the name, *i. e.*, water Baptism and the Eucharist, and that all others were untrue, uncertain, vain, or superstitious. There were, however, in every age of the church, (as now) a class of christians who rejected these outward rites altogether, as being opposed to the spiritual reign of Christ in the hearts of true believers ; and several persons at Orleans, in France, during the reign of King Robert, are stated to have been burnt at the stake for denying the necessity of water Baptism ; and even

now, in this civilized age, there are persons in Norway, and some other places in Europe, who are subjected to grievous persecution by the iron hand of ecclesiastical tyranny, because they conscientiously refuse to take their children to the priest for baptism. Although the reformers, were bright and shining lights in their day and generation, yet they penetrated not into the whole counsel of God, but, were they now living, would probably be as willing to embrace further light, as that which they first received. On the decision of these partially enlightened men, (and not united in their views on the subject either) the hypothesis seems to have been founded in protestant churches, of there being "two sacraments," and only two, in opposition to the Roman Catholics, who contend for seven. The orthodoxy of this decision has been too easily taken for granted, and these two "sacraments," have been handed down from generation to generation, as scriptural ordinances, without question or suspicion. It is the object of the following pages to show the grounds of the writer's conviction, that there is no authority in the New Testament, for the perpetuity of either of these ceremonies in the church of Christ ; but, that both water Baptism and a participation in the bread and wine of "the Eucharist," being Jewish, and not Christian ordinances, are not obligatory on the disciples of Him

whose kingdom does not come with any outward observation, but is to be known and found within.

Ceremonies, it has been observed, never fail to take off the mind from the substance of religion, and lead men into many dangerous mistakes ; for ceremonies, being easily observed, every one is apt to think himself religious enough who exactly performs them. But there is nothing so naturally opposite, as ceremony and christianity ; the latter, exhibits religion in its native simplicity to all the world ; whilst the former, parades it forth under mystical representations of a mere arbitrary signification.

It is obvious, therefore, that ceremonies perplex and darken the truth, instead of explaining and making it clear. But supposing they really did make things easier to be understood, would not that religion be the best which had the most of them ? Robert Hall has truly said, “The genius of the gospel, is not ceremonial but spiritual, consisting not in meats and drinks or outward observances, but in the cultivation of such interior graces as compose the essence of virtue, perfect the character, and purify the heart.” And the Church of England does not appear, in the following extract from “The Book of Common Prayer,” to profess so much regard for the ceremonial part of its service as many of its followers contend for with so much pertinacity :—“The keeping or omitting a ceremony (they say) in itself

considered, is but a small thing." "Christ's gospel is not a ceremonial law, but it is a religion to serve God, not in bondage of the figure or shadow, but in the freedom of the Spirit."

Many of the ceremonial and social practices of our Lord and his immediate followers, I speak not now of their precepts or their principles, were the result of education, and partook of the manners of the Jewish nation, to which they belonged, and the country in which they lived, or were called forth, at the time, by circumstances in which they were placed, but were never designed to be perpetuated in the church of Christ.

Amongst these national or traditional observances which were to decrease and die away, (as the Gospel Life and Light should advance to maturity) we may instance a few particulars, which all will admit, are not obligatory on us in the present day.

The apostles, at one time, approved of the custom, among the early believers, of having all things in common—anointing the sick with oil, washing the saints' feet, wearing the beard—greeting each other with a kiss, and other practices, long since fallen into disuse; and it may be added, that our Lord fasted forty days—He went into the mountain to pray—He wore a seamless garment—He bade the leprous man whom he had healed, go and shew himself to the priest, and offer those things which Moses commanded—on

another occasion, he said to the multitude and to his disciples, "The Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat, all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe that observe and do," and many other things, which will not in this day be urged upon us to follow.

In observing the things which appertained to the Law, our Saviour appears to have been very scrupulous and exact—for he came not to destroy the law but to fulfil it, even throughout, in every jot and tittle. But when he uttered those memorable words on the cross, "*It is finished*," the ceremonial law, the old covenant dispensation, was ended ; nor do I find that he appointed any other forms, or rites, or symbols to be observed by his followers in place thereof.

When Jesus yielded up the ghost, the veil of the temple was rent in twain, to denote that the light of the gospel was revealed, which had heretofore been hid under the ceremonial observances of the law. The paschal lamb, which the law directed to be slain, is no longer required to be offered, since Christ, the Lamb of God, our passover, is sacrificed for us, once for all. Seeing then, that Christ, the substance and end of all types, is received, therefore the law of ceremonies given by Moses, which was the shadow of good things to come, is fulfilled and finished, whilst grace and truth in the heart, which comes by Jesus Christ, shall remain for ever.

On this subject, the following observations of

Archbishop Leighton are worthy of careful consideration :—"The worship and ceremonies of the Jewish Church were all shadows of Jesus Christ and have their accomplishment in him, not only in his own body, but in his mystical body, his Church. The priesthood of the law represented him as the Great High Priest that offered up himself for our sins, that is, a priesthood altogether incommunicable, neither is there now any peculiar office of priesthood for offering sacrifice in the christian church, but His alone who is the Head of it. But this dignity, that is here mentioned, of a spiritual priesthood offering up spiritual sacrifices, is common to all those who are in Christ. As they are living stones, built on him into a spiritual temple, so they are priests of that same temple made by Him ; and, by his Spirit (that is in them) their offerings, through him, are made acceptable ; under the law, the dignity of priesthood stood in a few persons : but now, *all* they who believe are dignified to be priests unto God the Father. And this was signified by the rending of the veil of the temple at the death of Christ, not only that its ceremonies and sacrifices were to cease, as being all fulfilled in him, but that the people of God, who were before (by that veil) held out in the outer court, were to be admitted into the holy place, as being all of them priests, and fitted to offer sacrifices. The priesthood of the law was holy,

and its holiness was signified by many outward things, by anointings, and washings, and vestments ; but in this spiritual priesthood of the gospel, holiness itself is instead of all these, as being the substance of all. Now, because the priesthood here spoken of, is altogether spiritual, therefore the sacrifices must be so too. All sacrifice is not taken away, but it is changed from the offering of those things formerly in use, to spiritual sacrifices.”*

If our Lord had seen it expedient to have substituted any other rites or ordinances in his church, like those of the ceremonial laws of the Jews, Jeremiah’s prophecy would *not* apply to the christian dispensation, which all must allow it does very explicitly set forth and pourtray in language not to be misunderstood. [See Jer. xxxi. 31–34.] It is there expressly declared, that the new covenant which the Lord would make with his people, should not be according to the old covenant ; and it is described as a dispensation widely different from it. But the divers forms of water Baptism of the present day, do very much accord with the “divers washings” of the Jews, which they called “Baptisms ;” of this number, “the Baptism of Proselytes” was one, which for a time, was adopted by three of the apostles, being themselves of the Jewish

* Archbishop Leighton : *Practical Commentary*, 1 Peter.

nation ; and thus it was their converts came to be baptised with water. The bread and wine of christian communicants is likewise a continuation of the Jewish supper, resembling that Mosaic ceremony, and which is still in use among the Jews of the present day.

Dr. Trapp, a learned clergyman, who died in 1747, remarks, "that the apostle Paul became all things to all men, not in conforming to their impieties, but in the use of things indifferent, in bowels of compassion to them, and out of a fervent desire to gain souls to serve the Lord ;" and this remark applies to the other apostles also. At that early period of the church, many who were "weak in the faith" were received as members, and as no "doubtful disputations" were allowed, the believing Jews were suffered to retain many of their ancient customs, having first publicly confessed their belief, that Jesus Christ, the promised Messiah, had appeared in the flesh. On one occasion we find, when Paul had recently returned to Jerusalem, from a visit to the churches, the apostles bade him take notice how many Jews there were then in the city who *believed*, and yet were all zealous in observing the law ; amongst these observances, devotionally taking the bread and wine after supper, and their divers washings or baptisms, or purifications, bore a conspicuous part. As these practices among the believing Jews were in those

days permitted by the apostles and elders, it is easy to perceive how these two ceremonies came to be introduced into the christian church, until, at length, in the night of apostacy, they were, with divers others, acknowledged and enjoined as *christian* ordinances of indispensable obligation, but with no better authority than the example of Jews, and the subsequent contrivance of interested men.

“The grand apostacy into which the whole of christendom fell, was not brought about by believing the monstrous fables of heretics *without* the church, but by listening too uninquiringly to what was taught *within* the church, by renouncing private judgment and by trusting [implicitly] to official decisions. In one word, by overvaluing the effect of the outward ceremonies of ordination, baptism, and the Lord’s Supper.” “So rapid had been the progress of superstition, that in the third century these ceremonies had established for themselves a belief in their necessary efficacy, such as inevitably drew in afterwards, that mass of false religion which overspread the church.”*

It is no reproach to the apostles, that they, in some instances, observed the law of Moses, the church at that early period judaizing in many things ; neither were they able of a sudden to abolish all legal observances which had been of divine institution from time immemorial. Thus we find that Paul circum-

* Eclectic Review, 1838.

cised Timothy—made an offering in the temple—purified himself—had his head shorn at Cenchrea in conformity with the customs of the Jews, who being weak saw not the end of those things, and the apostle desired to give no cause of offence. So also, for a season, he complied with the common practice among his own people, in the use of water baptism, and the forms observed at the Jewish supper, for, as already remarked, he became, in things indifferent, all things to all men, that he might gain some, but he suffered them only, as Jewish, not as Christian institutions; and as the apostle himself acknowledges, “Unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews.”*

On this subject, several eminent commentators agree with the learned Dr. Gill, who says, “Although many legal types continued some considerable time after Christ’s death, yet they lost their positive and obligatory power, and *were used only as things indifferent, in compliance with the inveterate prejudices of new converts* lately brought over from Judaism, who could not quickly lay aside that great veneration which they had for the rites of Mosaic institutions.”

The broad essential duties of the old moral law were written in tables of stone, so that there could be no misunderstanding their import, and all people agreed in their meaning. But in the christian church, concerning the ordinances (so called) of

* See 1 Cor. ix. 19—22.

water baptism and the bread and wine, what diversity of practice is seen, and what a wide difference of opinion as to their efficacy ! And again, with regard to the *ceremonial* law ; the Lord spake unto Moses, and Moses wrote in a book the Hebrew ritual of the old covenant, so minute and so precise, that there could be no difference of opinion how these ceremonies were to be performed, and by whom ; all was clear to their comprehension, without doubt or ambiguity. And can we who live under this more glorious dispensation, more spiritual and more simple, and therefore more easily to be understood, believe that our merciful Saviour who knoweth our frame, and pitieth our infirmities, hath, under “the new covenant,” which he has made with his people, appointed certain acts and duties to be imperatively performed, and yet has left his followers, who are sincerely desirous to obey him, in the dark or in doubt, as to their efficacy, whether more or less, or at all ; and also as to the right mode and manner in which these important ordinances, if really such, are to be received, or by whom they are to be administered ? Surely not, for on this supposition, the old covenant would be preferable to the new one.

It may be said, that “with regard to water Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, all who use them agree in the rites themselves, although the various sects of christendom hold conflicting opinions on their uti-

lity, and the form and manner of their administration." Nevertheless, so much importance do most men attach to the *mode* in which these outward ceremonies are to be observed, they will not allow that any other form than their own has any efficacy or even to be accounted worthy of the name by which it is called. Thus we see, of the several professors who believe in the necessity of water baptism, some will not admit *that* to be baptism at all, unless it be administered by immersion, whilst others contend for pouring or sprinkling. Some grant it only to adults, others to infants ; some profess to consecrate the baptismal water, some mix salt with it, whilst others use the simple element. In one or more communities, they teach, that the baptismal water is sanctified, to the mystical washing away of sin, and that after the ceremony has been performed by the minister, he declares the child is regenerate, and grafted into the body of Christ. There are other communities which repudiate this doctrine, although they retain the rite under some other character. They who attach regenerating efficacy to water Baptism, do not acknowledge those who have not been baptised after their manner, to be members of Christ's Church, and refuse to inter the dead bodies of such within the precincts of their select enclosure.

Some professors deny the office, or right to bap-

tise, to all those who are not educated for the ministry of a particular class, others assert that the ministers of *any* church have authority to baptise, whilst some would not confine the administration to ministers at all, but would allow the rite to be performed by any one. When a case in law, affecting the validity of baptism, was lately decided, the judge observed, that the ceremony might be legally performed by the nurse or by the midwife.

The serious discrepancies consequent on the observance of the rite of water Baptism, may be thus hypothetically stated, in a colloquy between two of its leading administrators, both holding college diplomas. The Baptist minister, who contends for immersion of adults, says to the clergyman who sprinkles infants, (and to the other dissenting ministers also) "Your form of baptism is not orthodox, and, consequently, quite invalid; in short, it is no baptism at all. To administer it after your unscriptural manner, is, practically, to renounce the efficacy of the rite, and to deny that it is an ordinance of Christ's own appointing, or needful to be observed in his church." Again, the clergyman having been Episcopally ordained to the ministerial office, says to the Baptists, and to the other dissenters, "You have, none of you, any authority whatever, to administer baptism in *either* form. You have not received ordination at the hands of the bishop, neither can

you plead as being the apostles' successors ; your mode of baptism is therefore, unscriptural, and consequently, quite invalid ; in short, it is no baptism at all. To administer it with uncanonical hands is, practically, to deny the efficacy of the rite, as though it were not an ordinance of Christ's own appointing, or needful to be observed in his church."

Here, then, we find two leaders of the people, both, "Doctors in Divinity," yet of quite opposite views on the subject of water Baptism, and both denying the other's authority, or the validity of his mode of performing the ceremony. Nevertheless, although so opposed in their views, yet, if taken together, they will be found to unite in forming a condemnation of the rite *altogether*, under whatever form or by whomsoever administered. The one learned man denounces a portion of the administrators, and the other denounces the rest : the one denounces all that use sprinkling, the other denounces all that baptise who are not canonically ordained, whether they use sprinkling or immersion ; so that, between both, they leave no one authorized to administer the rite. What now becomes of the argument for water Baptism ? and how is the mind of an honest inquirer after the truth to be satisfied ? Surely, these discrepancies and doubtful disputations ought to lead him away from the teachings of men, and induce him, prayerfully, to search the scriptures for himself,

that he may really know what is the one true Baptism which now saveth, and what is not the one true Baptism.

We have the evidence of a respectable administrator of water Baptism, in proof of the irreverent manner in which the ceremony is often resorted to, and the profound ignorance of many of those who seek it for their children :—"Too often, alas ! (he says) with indevout thoughtlessness of God, and of the purposes for which he created them, they bring their children for baptism, when his providence has made them parents. To do so is the custom of the country in which they dwell ; of the church with which they worship, and they comply with it : they were baptised themselves, and they wish their children to be baptised also. The ceremony thus unintelligibly demanded, is often celebrated with indecent levity or vacant awe, and followed by an entertainment, in which the liberty of christian mirth is far overstepped."*

With regard to that called the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, still greater divisions exist among those who conscientiously participate therein. The conflicting views entertained by professing christians, on this subject, have occasioned throughout the greater part of the christian era, such an amount of

* J. Glyde of Bradford, minister of a congregation there.

animosity, ill-will, and even bloodshed, that the subject forms a frightful portraiture in ecclesiastical history ; and the bitterness of contending churches and adverse communicants is not extinguished at the present day.

A learned and religious writer of the seventeenth century, who had been strictly educated in the use of these ceremonies, has made this acknowledgment, "So much debate, contention, jangling, and quarrelling, there has been among christians, respecting those called sacraments, that it may be safely said, the controversy about their number, nature, virtue, efficacy, and mode of administration, hath been greater than about any other doctrine whatever, whether as between papists and protestants, or among protestants themselves." The contention arising out of the discordant views entertained on the subject, has robbed the christian's crown of one of its brightest jewels, (LOVE) and has fostered a spirit diametrically opposed to the benign principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is not necessary here to describe all the discrepancies which characterize the administration of that called "the Lord's Supper," and the several degrees of importance which the various sects attach to the rite, a few only of the diverse opinions and practices which prevail on this subject, can here be brought into notice. It may be remarked, by the way, that although called a "Sup-

per," it is usual now to take it in a forenoon, in a place appointed for public worship, whilst some receive it at their own dwellings ; but our Lord and his company of twelve apostles took their last supper together, in the evening, in "the guest chamber," probably an upper room of an inn, and the bread and wine after supper. The largest portion of christian professors, it is to be lamented, believe in the doctrine of transubstantiation, and that the bread and wine, through the medium of the priest, are actually changed into the real presence, being persuaded, when they partake of these elements, that they actually eat the corporeal flesh and drink the blood of the Son of God, or, to quote their own words, "The body and blood, the soul and divinity of Christ." Bishop Jeremy Taylor, on this subject, has truly, and much to the purpose, observed, that "One man *discourses* on the sacrament, another *receives* Christ : one discourses for or against transubstantiation, but the good man, feels HIMSELF to be changed, and so joined to Christ. He only understands the true sense of transubstantiation, while he becomes (to Christ) bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh, and of the same spirit with his Lord. From holiness, we have the best instruction, for that which we are taught by the Holy Spirit of God, this new nature, this vital principle within us ; it is, that is worth

learning ; not vain and empty, idle and insignificant notions, in which you may have laboured until your eyes are fixed in their orbs," "and still be no better and no wiser." "If the Spirit of God be your teacher, he will teach you such truths as will make you know and love God, and become like to him and enjoy him, *by passing from similitudes to a union with him.*"

It was principally for having written, in defence of transubstantiation, that Henry VIII. received from the pope, the title of "Defender of the Faith ;" and on account of the same preposterous doctrine, and other matters, several of the most eminent martyrs, under the reign of Queen Mary, suffered the sentence of death, for firmly and conscientiously denying their belief therein.

This carnal and outward view of that which is really spiritual, reminds one of a parallel in the history of the Crusades, or Holy Wars, as they were called. When Pope Urban II., about the year 1190, succeeded in causing an immense army to be raised, from amongst the several nations of christendom, to go forth on that murderous expedition into Palestine, for the avowed purpose of rescuing "the Holy Sepulchre," from the hands of infidels ; he directed, that every soldier should wear on his dress, the pattern of the cross, "as an outward and visible sign of their inward love or Christ ;" and that the saying might be fulfilled

“he who takes up the cross and follows me, is worthy of me !”

But to proceed—whilst the large body of christian professors believe in the doctrine of transubstantiation, others adopt that of consubstantiation, and deny the real presence, but contend that the elements are converted, by the priest, into a *representation* of the body and blood of Christ ; whilst another class regard them simply as bread and wine, without any mysterious change whatever. Some dispense “the Supper,” in both kinds, whilst others distribute bread only. Some refuse the cup to “the laity,”—whilst others give it to both “clergy and laity.” Some profess to consecrate the bread and wine, others dispense it simply. Some regard the ordinance as of saving efficacy, hence their zeal to administer it to *dying* persons, whilst others take it only as a commemorative token. Some will have “the Supper” administered every week, or oftener ; some, once a month ; others, once or twice a year, or only occasionally. Some give it, indiscriminately, to all who desire it, this is called open communion ; whilst others refuse it to such as have not been baptised, and this is called strict communion. Some give it to the people sitting ; some, standing ; some, on their knees, or reclining, with other variations of practice, not needful now to enumerate. In some places, the fragments which are left, become the per-

quisites of the subordinate officers of the church ; in other places, they are divided amongst the poor people who are present.

This sacriligious manner, as it is considered by some, of disposing of the remains of the "consecrated elements," has lately become a subject for grave deliberation amongst a section of the Established Church, and it has been recommended, effectually to prevent the remnants from being consumed as common food for the nourishment of the outward man, that they be destroyed ; buried, or burnt ; believing, that after "consecration" by the priest, the bread and wine are transformed, (by some more, and by some less) into the very nature of the body and blood of our holy Redeemer. How they can reconcile, thus to treat, that which they esteem of so sacred a character, is not easy to determine.

Then again, in modern times, we have "total abstiners," who have pledged themselves to drink no wine, and yet are not satisfied to refrain from partaking of this rite which is so much insisted upon. Thus, through weakness, they come under a yoke of bondage from which the truth of the gospel would set them free ; and their conscience becomes offended whether they take the cup, or whether they refuse it. Various devices have been suggested to remove these scruples, but the pure principles of christianity require no such contrivances.

The sagacious critics of "the Christian Observer," in answer to a number of their correspondents, who inquired wherefore their communications on these subjects, had not been noticed in that work, replied, that of tracts, sermons, pamphlets, or treatises upon baptism, the baptismal service, the controversies respecting the Lord's Supper, and various similar matters, some hundreds had come under their notice. Forty recent publications had come before them on the subject of regeneration in baptism, every writer having an hypothesis of his own. They significantly add, for the comfort of those of their correspondents who considered their effusions slighted, that if any ten, or even six (authors) amongst them, will concur in the same solution of the question, they promise then, to review this cluster of publications so harmonizing together.

Viewing all this contrariety of practice, (and much more might be adduced) with the wide difference of esteem in which these two ordinances are held by the various professors of the christian name, to say nothing of charity which is too often quenched in the controversy; the honest inquirer after truth, seems compelled to choose between two conclusions. Either our Saviour has appointed certain essential duties in his church to be imperatively observed by its members, and at the same time has left them in the dark, or in doubt, as to their

designed efficacy, whether more or less, or any, and also as to the right mode and manner of their administration, and in total ignorance of any duly authorized administrator. Or, which is the safest conclusion, seeing that God is a God of order and not of discord, that these so called ordinances of water Baptism, and the bread and wine, are not of Christ's own appointing, and therefore not obligatory on his followers.

It may be urged (by the reader) against this conclusion, that "the abuse of a good and right thing is no argument against its use ;" whilst admitting this, the writer would observe, that these many discrepancies, important as they are, even when standing by themselves, are brought forward in this place, as collateral evidence only, in support of proof about to be offered, that the use of these things is without the authority of Christ in his church. They may serve also at the same time, to stimulate those, who take them on trust from their teachers, or observe them on the recommendation of others, and not on conviction ; to search and judge for themselves upon what foundation these mystic symbols of contending schools have become part and parcel of the christian's faith, seeing that so great a number of professors, so widely differ in their judgment as to their necessity or utility, and as to the mode and manner of their administration.

It is not through prejudice of education or affectation of singularity, but after a patient investigation of the truth, and a prayerful desire of being rightly directed, that the writer has concluded it safest for him, to taste not, touch not, and handle not these things of time and sense, which being of the earth, earthy, cannot affect the soul, but must perish with the using. Jesus Christ, in his own person, having fulfilled every jot and tittle of the law, thereby put an end to all carnal ordinances, which had been instituted for a time, nailing them to his cross ; thence a new covenant dispensation commenced, which is to remain until the end of the world. Of this new covenant, it was foretold, that it should not be like the old covenant which God made with the fathers, which was outward and ceremonial ; but it was to be inward and spiritual, the law written in the heart. So that Christ having removed the veil, and stripped his gospel, which was hidden under the law, of all those external types and ceremonies that required the intervention of the priest to administer ; his religion has become an *individual* work, so plain and so easy to be understood, that the wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein.

I believe, that when the carnal ordinances of the law were taken out of the way, and nailed to the cross of Christ, they ceased for ever as acceptable offerings to God ; and Christ himself did not institute

any other ritual in place thereof, but left his followers free from circumcision, and free from every other yoke of bondage ; and this, notwithstanding that circumcision, water baptism, and the supper, and probably other Jewish observances, were permitted for a season, out of regard to the prejudices of the converts from Judaism, in some of the newly gathered churches ; but none of them were appointed by Christ, or designed to continue in his church, and the apostles themselves, evidently regarded these ceremonies as part of the abrogated covenant which were to die away and have no abiding place in the new dispensation.

When Peter, and James, and John, were with our blessed Lord on the mountain, they heard a voice from Heaven, saying : “ This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear him.” William Dell, observes on this passage, that, “ The more the faithful have kept to the word of Christ, the more they have been free from error ; and the more they have left this, and turned aside after the doctrines of men, though even in some manner holy, the more they have been perverted and seduced, insomuch that the true church, and the very faithful themselves, have received, held, and maintained, divers errors, and false doctrines, and opinions, even for many ages and generations ; yea, and have not been altogether free from some, from the very apostles’ times ; and because many,

or most godly men, in former ages, held such and such opinions, therefore the following have taken them up, on trust, from them, and have therefore entertained them as sure and certain.

“ To free the faithful from former mistakes, and consequently from all error, there is no other way than this, wholly to forsake the doctrines of men, and to lay by all those opinions that we have sucked in from our very cradles, and which are now become a natural religion to us, I say, utterly to lay by and wholly to forget all those things, and to come immediately to the pure and unerring word of God, and to the voice of Jesus Christ himself, by his Spirit, wherein all things are true, sincere and perfect, and not to bring hearts that are prepossessed with doctrines and opinions learned of men, but, to come thither with hearts and consciences free and unengaged, and in all meekness, uprightness and simplicity, to hear what Jesus Christ, the faithful and true witness will say to his spirit, which also is the spirit of truth : and to receive and believe *that* alone, though never so differing from the opinions and doctrines of this present age as well as the former ages, and though perhaps, the whole nation should be offended with it.”*

Another pious writer, in later times, has this admirable sentiment, “ I am desirous of being taught by

* William Dell, M.A. (formerly Master of Caius College, Cambridge,) on the Doctrine of Baptisms.

the labours of learned men : more desirous of being taught by the written word of inspiration ; but, amidst all, and above all, to be taught of God ; or as our Liturgy explains it, by the inspiration of God's Holy Spirit.”*

From the evidence which has been brought into view, in this little work, the writer is brought to the conclusion, that the sacraments (so called) of bread and wine, and water baptism, are not ordinances of Christ's own appointing, but an outward form unprofitable for him to observe. But more especially is he confirmed in this judgment, by the conviction in his own mind, that the kingdom of heaven comes not with any outward observation,—does not stand connected with meats or drinks, with bread and wine, or divers washings, or forms of water baptism : but, that Christ's authority in his church, is inward and spiritual ; in his people, collectively and individually, and designed to purify the root of the corrupt tree, that the fruit, as a consequence, may be good also.

The writer is not altogether ignorant of much that has been written, in defence of these rites. Learned men have brought to the controversy, great store of argument, and a laborious research into the obscure pages of antiquity, and many ingenious inferences whereon to build their pre-conceived opinions ; but, whilst acknowledging this array of human acquire-

† James Hervey, M.A. Rector of Weston Favell.

ments, he laments it has not been exercised more, in maintaining pure unadulterated gospel truth, but, as it appears to him, a building on other foundation than that of Christ. To offer the outward elements of water, and bread and wine, as mysteries affecting the soul's salvation, and to persuade people to believe in their saving efficacy, is it not to rob Christ, who invites to a baptism and a supper of his own, and to place his prerogative in the hands of the priest, and thus to trammel immortal beings with an ecclesiastical mechanism, to the jeopardy of their souls? I am no prophet, neither am I a prophet's son, but when the master builders speak a language confounding to each other, history may teach us that the edifice, designed, in their own wisdom, to reach unto heaven, so that by their own works, they may climb up some other way, and not by Christ, the true and living way, such a superstructure must, in course of God's providence, fall to the earth, in which it was formed.

It has frequently been, to some, a subject for reproach, and of wonder to many others, that any should lay claim, even to the name of christians, who deviate so far from the general practice, as to deny the validity of "Baptism," and "the Lord's supper."* To such objection, there is however, this

* One instance (among others) may be sufficient to notice here ; a large association of influential and leading men of various

reply,—The writer, and those who think with him, do, indeed, acknowledge both. “The inward and spiritual grace” of the one true Baptism, and also, the supper of our Lord, we thankfully receive, and reverently appreciate, as the spiritual gifts of our

religious denominations, throughout the three kingdoms, has recently been formed, with the avowed purpose of embracing every believer, of every class, in one bond of “Christian Union.”

The professed object of this “Evangelical Alliance,” seems to be plausible and praiseworthy, but its creed is sectarian and exclusive. Alas! Alas! for creeds, what mischief they have wrought among fellow-believers, the annals of the church do abundantly testify! How has the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace, been broken by these contrivances of men!

The oft repeated terms of salvation, as held forth in the scriptures of truth, are comprised in this, “believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” But, this so called “United Brotherhood of ALL Christians,” by their eight articles of confession of faith, has covertly shut out, and excluded the conscientious non-ritualists, although believers in, and sincere followers of the Lord Jesus according to knowledge, as though they denied the Lord that bought them, and were not worthy of being called by his holy name; and thus, they who for conscience’ sake, cannot accept “the Sacraments” as ordinances of Christ’s appointing in his church, are, for that reason, (by plain inference, easily understood,) accounted as without the christian pale. Whether this exclusion be, or be not, matter of regret to the rejected, is no part of the present question, but it serves to show how an uncharitable feeling may sometimes, perhaps unconsciously, insinuate itself into the minds of even good men, and it may be, raise the secret language of exultation in the breast, “God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men, or even as this publican.” “Stand by thyself, I am more righteous than thou.”

heavenly Father, the one for the purification, and the other, for the nourishment of the soul unto eternal life ; but the “outward and visible signs,” we conscientiously reject, as believing them to be the inventions which men have sought out, tending to mystify and obscure the simple doctrines of the everlasting Gospel.

The question now proposed to be considered is this, —whether there is, or is not, scripture evidence to prove, that Christ himself, instituted the two sacraments of water Baptism, and the Supper of bread and wine, and enjoined the perpetual use of them in his church ; consequently, whether the author is, or is not, justified in declining the use of them.

ON BAPTISM.

“There is one Lord, and one faith, and one *baptism*.” “The baptism that doth now save us, is “not the putting away the filth of the flesh, [not by the agency of water] not by works of righteousness which we have done ; but according to his mercy, he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost.”—*See Peter and Paul.*

WATER, is a term frequently used in Scripture, as a figure of speech, to denote purifying or cleansing. The word fire, is also employed in the same figurative language, to describe a medium of purification ; whilst, however, water can only cleanse the outside, fire is the purifier of the whole mass. By this searching operation, the mixture is resolved into its separate elements ; the dross and the tin, and the reprobate silver, are at length consumed, whilst the pure gold only remains for the refiner's use. Hence, it is said of Christ, “He shall baptise you *with the Holy Ghost, and with fire ;*” and one of the prophets alludes to the office of the Messiah, as “sitting like a refiner, with fire.” These passages, and several others of holy writ, set forth the

heart-searching nature of Christ's baptism, the baptism of the Holy Ghost and of fire, to which water will by no means apply.

If the reader can take along with him this view of the subject, he will readily perceive, that Christ's baptism and water baptism are two separate and distinct operations, and have no affinity for each other, but must stand or fall, (in the estimation of the serious and candid inquirer) each on its own individual merit, without any connexion or dependence one with the other.

The term *baptise*, had the same signification among the Jews, in the days of our Lord and his apostles, as we intend by the word *purify*; and the two words may be used, in scripture language, almost interchangeably. The Jews had divers washings, as sprinkling, pouring, and dipping. All these forms were called baptisms, or purifications: hence the apostle Paul, when writing to the Hebrews, cautioned them against the doctrine of baptisms, (plural) as unprofitable discussion.

At the marriage of Cana, "there were set, six water pots of stone, *after the manner of the purifying of the Jews.*" When Pontius Pilate was prevailed upon to condemn our Lord to be crucified, he took water, and washed his hands, as a token to the Jews, that he thus purified himself (*after their manner*) from that unjust sentence. It was through the form and process

of washing,—the customary mode of purification among the Israelites,—that Elisha wrought the miraculous restoration of Naaman, the leper. “Go,” said he, “and wash in Jordan seven times, and * * thou shalt be clean.” Nevertheless, the real cause of Naaman’s cure was his faith, which was manifested by his obedience. Faith in the omnipotent power of the God of Israel, and obedience to his especial command by the mouth of his prophet. No leper, not divinely directed, as Naaman was, could have his flesh restored, although he might dip, as he did, seven times in the waters of Jordan.

It is believed that water Baptism was practised as early as under Moses in the wilderness ; however, it may safely be affirmed, that it had place among the Israelites, many hundred years before the time of our Saviour. The Israelites and the Jews were exceedingly zealous in making converts from amongst the heathen, and spared neither time or labour for this object, so that our Saviour remarked of the Scribes and Pharisees, in his day, that they “compassed sea and land to make one proselyte.”

In consequence of these unwearied exertions, many thousands of heathen were proselyted before the Christian Era. Of this vast number of converts to Judaism, all were baptised. Whenever proselytism took place, or a public profession of the Jewish faith, Baptism always followed, and this particular

form was called “ the Baptism of the Proselytes,” to distinguish it from the others. It was not, however, until they had afterwards submitted to the rite of circumcision, that they were allowed all the privileges of Jewish citizens. The Abbé Fleury, in relating the manner of the Jews receiving proselytes, as affirmed by their celebrated historian Maimonides, is decided in his judgment, that water Baptism (as well as some other ceremonies now in use) is not a christian but a Jewish Institution. He remarks, “ It will, I doubt not, be some pleasure to the reader, to trace out the origin of christian baptism, and of the ancient ceremonies which the church observed in it. *For they are all borrowed from the Jews, Jesus Christ and his apostles not having thought fit to abolish them, or to substitute new ones in their room.*” In another place, the Abbé describes the manner of the Jewish baptism of proselytes, from which the following account is extracted :—

“ The second ceremony was washing, or baptism, which must have been performed in the presence of, at least, three Jews of distinction. At the time of the performance of it, the proselyte declared his abhorrence of his past life, and that it was neither ambition nor avarice, but a sincere love of the Law of Moses, which prevailed on him to be baptised :
 * * * He promised, at the same time, to lead a godly life, to worship the true God, and to keep

his commandments." "And hence," continues the Abbé, "the christian church borrowed those ceremonies, which she makes use of * * * for it is manifest, that the institution of baptism * * * * and the discipline of the primitive church in the administration of it, have a relation to this ceremony among the Jews."* It appears, from Maimonides, that this particular baptism of the Jews, was by immersion, or by dipping, or by affusion.

This ancient and customary mode of admitting proselytes into the Jewish community was closely followed by the apostles :—First, there was a profession of *belief* in the Messiah, then followed baptism with water, accordingly we find that Philip said to the Eunuch, when he requested to be baptised, "If thou *believest* with all thine heart, thou mayst,"† then Philip went down into the water with the Eunuch, and baptised him—others also of Samaria, when they *believed* were baptised, both men and women. Then Simon Magus, *believed*, and he was baptised ; notwithstanding his heart was not right in the sight of God : likewise many of the Corinthians having heard Paul preach, *believed*, and were baptised. This man-

* Abbé Fleury, Manners of the Ancient Israelites.

† The Evangelist's words, are, "Thou mayst," and not—Thou *must* be baptised.

ner of admitting proselytes had been in use for many generations, before any of the apostles adopted it ; and baptism among the Jews, had always followed a profession of belief, from about the time of Moses down to that of the apostles.

It is clear, therefore, that water Baptism was not a new institution of Christ's appointing, but a national custom continued (at least for a season) by the apostles as they found it practised by their own countrymen, the Jews. Thus much the learned Dr. Lightfoot fully admits, at the same time, he advocates a continuance of the practice among christians. Whilst this mode of receiving proselytes, was in constant use among the Jews ; John the Baptist, appeared amongst them, a man sent from God to prepare the way for the coming of the Messiah. Now, John, was a very remarkable character, his birth had been foretold by an angel under extraordinary circumstances. His youth appears to have been spent in solitude and retirement, and his food and raiment were of the simplest and meanest qualities. It is observed, "that he grew and waxed strong in the Spirit, and was in the deserts, till the day of his showing unto Israel : " supposed to be then about thirty years of age. All men accounted John as a prophet, and our Saviour testified of him that he was one of the greatest of prophets. The appearance and manner of the Baptist, when he first came out

into the world, excited general notice, and his preaching commanded great attention from the people. At such a juncture, and seeing that "divers washings were then in constant use among the Jews, and the doctrine of baptisms" maintained, it is not to be wondered, that the people should flock in crowds, to so extraordinary a person as John, sent as he was to administer a baptism peculiarly his own, insomuch, there went out multitudes from Jerusalem and all Judea, who were baptised by him, *confessing their sins*, hence John's baptism was called the baptism of repentance, and not the baptism of proselytes. This latter form, the apostles used after the manner of the Jews, and was consequent on a confession of faith by the new believer, whether in Jesus Christ or in Moses. Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan to be baptised of John, but he forbade him, and said, "I have need to be baptised of *thee*, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering, said unto him, Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him."

Thus it is clear, that Christ for the reason which he then gave, submitted himself to John's baptism, and not to a baptism of his own instituting, but the advocates for water Baptism in the present day, do not admit that they derive their auothrity from the Baptist, nor of the Jews, but from the apostles, who, certainly, as is here proved, borrowed the practice

from the Jews. Now, if it were the fact, that our Lord underwent the water Baptism of John, and at the same time, instituted another water Baptism of his own for his followers, would it not go to prove that our Saviour's example and his doctrine were not in accordance with each other? which would be irreverent to believe. The words of our Lord "Suffer it to be so now," evidently allude to the temporary character of water Baptism; so, also, does the declaration of John, when comparing Christ's baptism and his mission, with that of his own: "I indeed," said he, "baptise you with *water*, but there standeth one among you who shall baptise you with the *Holy Ghost*." "He must increase, but I must decrease."

Here then, are two baptisms, described by the Baptist himself, distinct as words can place them; the one with water, the other without water. Is it not, then, presumptuous to join them together which the Holy Spirit has separated, under the plea of the two making up but one baptism, and thus to evade the proof of water, being any part of Christ's baptism? The baptism which now saveth, "is not the putting away the filth of the flesh," of which water is the agent, but the answer of a good conscience, which the baptism of the Spirit can alone produce, purifying the heart of every evil thought. Thus said our Lord to his disciples, "John truly baptised with water, but ye shall be baptised with the *Holy Ghost*."

Observe, not with water, nor with the Holy Ghost *and water*, but with the Holy Ghost. Can anything be more decisive than these words of our Lord, that water Baptism is none of his, but the baptism of the Holy Spirit only : can any words be more explicit to prove the distinction and complete separation between Christ's baptism and that of water ? shewing, also, as it does, that water Baptism does not confer grace on the recipients.

The apostle Peter, makes the like distinction between Christ's baptism, which is spiritual, and that of water, which is outward. When at Cesarea, at the house of Cornelius, who had called together his kinsmen and near friends to meet him, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. Peter seeing this, said, " Then remembered I the words of the Lord," how he said, " John, indeed, baptised with water, but ye shall be baptised with the Holy Ghost." Here is the testimony of the apostle Peter that these men were baptised (through the instrumentality of the gospel preached by him) with the Holy Spirit, that is with Christ's baptism. After this, the historian informs us, they were baptised with water. Here, again, we have two distinct and separate baptisms, the one which is Christ's, saving and essential, and afterwards the other, outward and formal, according to the custom of those days. Now these Cesarean converts were all Gentiles, hence

Peter's appeal to the Jews who stood by, "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptised?" for water Baptism being a Jewish ordinance, they were very likely to raise objections and to forbid its being applied to Gentiles, who had not embraced Judaism. In reference to the present practice among christians, it is worthy of notice, that the apostles did not administer water Baptism to children,* or to such persons who had been born of christian parents, but to converts only. In this they evidently followed the established custom among the Jews, who baptised proselytes only, in their conversion to Judaism, but not their children.

Again, we find the same line of distinction drawn between the two baptisms. When Peter and John were sent into Samaria, it is said, "they prayed for the believers, that they might receive the Holy Ghost, for as yet he had fallen on none of them, only they were baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus." Then, that is, some time after they had been baptised with water, the apostles laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost. In short, the New Testament, that is, the divine record of the new covenant dispensation, nowhere says that there are

* Much ingenuity has been used to support a conjecture, (but has failed in proving) that the apostles baptised children with water, as well as adults.

two baptisms, *i. e.* “one of water, and the other of the Spirit, which go to make up one baptism,” but plainly, there is “*One Baptism.*” As there is but one Lord, and but one faith, so there is but one baptism : not two Lords, two faiths, or two baptisms, but only one. Neither is it said in scripture, that this one baptism consists of two parts, for it is of itself complete and entire, requiring no outward or visible sign, likeness, form, or figure, to make its office and character known in the experience of every repentant sinner, who is willing to come to Christ, and submit to its purifying operation.

“As many as were baptised into Jesus Christ, were baptised into his death.” This figurative language of the apostle, evidently sets forth the spiritual and humbling character of Christ’s baptism. Consonant with this view, is our Lord’s query to two of his followers—“Can ye drink of the cup that I drink of, and be baptised with the baptism that I am baptised with?” On another occasion, he feelingly and forebodingly exclaimed, “I have a baptism to be baptised with, and how am I straitened until it be accomplished?” And again, when the all-important work which his Father had given him to do was nearly accomplished, and his life was about to be offered up, he prayed, saying—“Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me ; nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done.” No one whose views

are not grossly outward and carnal, will affirm that the baptism and cup, here spoken of, allude to any thing of a tangible or material nature.

These passages of holy writ, as well as many others, set forth, in a lively manner, the duty of a perfect submission to the will of God. Christ, our great exemplar, we here see, was willing to finish the work given him by his Father to do, even unto death. And herein we are instructed, that his followers must also stand resigned to submit to sacrifice, when called upon to suffer for his sake and the gospel's, should it be required, even unto death, agreeable to his declaration to his disciples—"Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of, and with the baptism that I am baptised withal, ye shall be baptised."

The scripture authority which is brought forward in favour of water Baptism, and is sometimes designated as "the great law of christian baptism," by those who contend for the rite, appears to be founded on the command of our Lord to his disciples, "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." (Matt. xxviii. 19.)

Here observe, we have no mention of water, but a baptism quite distinct and different from all those then in use, whether that of the Jews, who baptised in the name of Moses, or of John, who baptised in

his own name, or of the apostles who used the name of "the Lord Jesus." These were all limited to individual persons. Water baptism can only be administered to one person at one time, but the one appointed by our Lord, extended to congregations and to all nations, and was to be performed in the name and power of the "Father, Son, and Holy Ghost." Thus we read, that, "while Peter yet spake, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word," individually, collectively, and simultaneously. It is assumed by the advocates for water Baptism, but without proof, that our Lord, in giving this commission to his disciples, *intended* water Baptism, which would lead to the dangerous conclusion, that the one saving baptism is that of water. The word water is not found in the text alluded to, or in any part of the chapter, neither can it be fairly inferred.

If this text was closely and more correctly translated, according to several learned writers, it would run thus, and its import be more obvious. "Go ye, therefore, disciple, or proselyte, or convert, all nations, baptising or dipping them *into* the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." To baptise or to dip *into* the name [or power]* of the Father, &c., must be that which Paul spoke of, when

* Name or power. I object to the view which some have, that the name of the Lord must mean only so many letters of a word, by which he is called ; it is frequently put for his saving power,

he said, "By one spirit we are all baptised into one body." It is therefore the Spirit, and not visible water that baptiseth a man into the spiritual body, by which he becomes a living integral member of that body, the true catholic church, whereof Christ is the head.

If water was intended by our Lord as the medium, when he bade his disciples go into all nations, and baptise the people "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit," surely, there would be some evidence that they so understood it, and acted upon it, and that, in administering water Baptism, they would have used the form of words prescribed, whereas the contrary appears, nor do I find that those words of our Lord were ever used by the apostles when they administered water Baptism, but, "the name of the Lord Jesus" only, so that there is no doubt in my mind, but that the apostles understood the command of our Lord to mean, a baptising power beyond that of water, and independent of it, even the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which is Christ's baptism, for we are informed, that the apostles, accordingly "went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them," in healing the sick, raising the dead, and *baptising with the Holy Ghost*.

"The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it and is safe."—See Prov. xviii. 10, and many other places of similar import.

They were not commanded to baptise all nations with *water*, but they were commanded to baptise, and they did baptise with the Holy Ghost, and in this manner they strictly fulfilled their Lord's commission, confirming the word preached by signs and miracles. It may be said that the apostles did also baptise with water, true, some of them did so for a time, but this they did by permission (for the reasons elsewhere given,) and not by commandment.

It was reported that the disciples of Jesus administered water Baptism to more persons than John the Baptist himself, but it nowhere appears, that they did it by our Lord's appointing, although he suffered it to be so then ; but as this mode of acknowledging proselytes was in common use among the Jews, so the apostles (or a few of them) continued it for a season, baptising such believers in Jesus as came to them and desired it. It is probable the apostles used pouring, or some other speedy ablution, as among the Jews, for it is hard to conceive, of so many thousand new converts, they could always have administered the rite by immersion, particularly in those places where much water was not to be met with, as it was at the Jordan, at Enon and Bethabara, where John's baptising stations appear to have been, because there was much water there. Time and other circumstances would hardly permit the apostles, whilst moving from place to place, to baptise so great multitudes by immersion,

as the Baptist did ; besides, the apostles evidently adopted baptism after the usual manner of the Jews, and not after that of John.

It is granted, because it is so recorded, that our Lord himself was baptised with water, but this was undoubtedly John's baptism, and not his own. We do not read that Christ ever recommended water Baptism to his followers, or that he ever recognized it as *his* baptism, neither does it appear that the apostles themselves submitted to water Baptism, or that they baptised each other, or children born of christian parents, but only such converts to the christian faith as came to them and desired it.

Christ himself never baptised *any* with water, nor is it said he ever commanded his disciples to baptise with *water*. The apostles, being Jews, were all accustomed to the several forms of Jewish baptisms, and some of them had been the immediate followers of John, hence their predilection for water Baptism ; and seeing that the people eagerly sought it at their hands, our Lord suffered it to be so then, but he never commanded it, or commended it, much less did he practice it, or institute it as a standing ordinance in his church.

That Christ suffered his disciples to baptise with water, or that he himself had submitted thereto, is no proof that water Baptism was designed by him to continue, in his future Church, any more than,

because he ate the passover with his apostles, therefore we ought, in this day, to follow the practice of the Jews herein, and in other particulars beside. But some have said, that, "baptism with water must necessarily be implied in the text before recited, (page 43), seeing that the baptism of the Holy Ghost is Christ's prerogative only, and cannot be administered by human agency," but it is expressly said, that these messengers of our Lord, so commissioned by him, *did baptise with the Holy Ghost*. (See Acts viii. 17 ; x. 44, 45 ; xi. 15 ; xix. 6, &c.) Moreover we read, that Christ empowered his disciples to heal the sick, to raise the dead, and to forgive sins ; and he promised to be with them to the end of the world : with him, and by his power strengthening them, they were enabled to do all things, so that, by the laying on of the apostle's hands, and by means of their preaching, it is said, many received the Holy Ghost, and, no doubt, the hearts of these became purified through faith in Christ, by the baptising power of his Holy Spirit on their spirit.

Dr. Watts has remarked, that in the days of the apostles, "multitudes of christian converts *were born again by the preaching of the word*, and raised to a divine life ; many, both Jews and Gentiles, were regenerated, sanctified, and saved by the ministration of the gospel" [through the baptising power of Christ's own appointed ministers], he adds, "and that

without the aid of the written word, before the New Testament was compiled or known" [and as truly without the aid of water.]

When Jesus was speaking to Nicodemus of the new birth, he said, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God: that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." Some persons, and not a few, will have this text to support their views of water Baptism. I have not, myself, been able to discover the analogy or coincidence, much less unity, between being born of water and being baptised with water; the two acts seem, to me, quite unconnected and distinct from each other. Sprinkling, or dipping the body in water, is an outward act, and may be performed in the will and wisdom of man; but, to experience the new birth unto righteousness, is an inward work, wrought in the heart by "the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost."

These two-fold expressions of our Lord,—to be born of water and the Spirit, and to be born of the flesh and the Spirit, seem to have but one object, *i. e.*, to describe the character of the two births; the one, the natural birth (which water and the flesh may both represent); and the other, the spiritual birth. Some writers have explained the text, by supposing that Christ had in view, the living water,

of which he spake to the woman at Jacob's well ; and in another place, it is said, "Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink, he that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water, but this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive."

Maimonides says, "a Gentile who is become a proselyte, and a slave who is set at liberty, are both, as it were, new born babes."

Adam Clarke, in a note on this remark, in Claude Fleury's "Manners of the Israelites," observes, on John iii. 1—9, "Our blessed Lord, takes this second birth, in a much higher, and more sublime sense, than it was understood by the Jews in general." "Hence," he says,—“a man must not only be born of *water*, but of the *Holy Spirit*, *i. e.*, his soul must be completely changed from sinfulness to holiness ; the very thoughts of his heart being cleansed by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, that he might perfectly love, and worthily magnify his Maker."

Looking then, at the words of our Lord to Nicodemus, in every point of view, it seems clear, that his design was, to set before this master in Israel, the character of the two births ; and that, so sure as a man is born by nature, prone to evil, so must he be born again of the Spirit, and become a new creature, before he can enter the kingdom

of heaven. But, a being *baptised* with water, is not stated or implied in the text, nor does it appear to have any affinity with “the new birth,” or a “being born again.” “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature,”—“a new born babe desiring the sincere milk of the word.” This, I apprehend, is the true definition of the second birth, or a being born again. The old man, with his corrupt deeds, is put off, and all things become new, and all things of God,—but water has no agency in this regenerative process.

There is one other plea for water Baptism, that did it not assume some consequence, from the high quarter in which it is espoused, would hardly seem to claim attention here.

In a discourse on Baptism, by Matthew Pilkington, L. L. B., formerly Prebendary of Lichfield Cathedral, the author has undertaken the task of proving, “when—by whom—and in what manner, baptism is to be properly administered and received.” In attempting to point out the authorized agents for administering the rite, he remarks, “that, as it hath pleased God to continue a regular succession of ministers, in the church of Christ, none can properly baptise but those who have received a regular commission for that purpose.” The value of this assertion, not proved, must be taken for just what it is worth, and left to stand or fall on its own merits.

The argument which this astute debater has found—to prove, that Christ instituted the rite of water Baptism, is grounded on John xiii. 4—15. These are his words, “When our Lord had baptised his twelve apostles,* he told them he had given them an *example*, that they should do as he had done to them ;” from this, he would have it inferred, that consequently, the *successors* of the twelve apostles, in the right line, have, exclusively, the Saviour’s authority to administer water Baptism ; but this specification of their patent is open to controversy.

Now, the *example* alluded to, which our Lord gave to his apostles, was, *washing their feet* ; and if this can be proved to be christian baptism, as instituted by our Lord to be continued in his church, it must be granted that the mode and manner of performing it, in every respect, is clear and certain, and ought at least, to settle the question regarding infant or adult baptism, and sprinkling or washing.

But this learned author is at no loss in reconciling sprinkling the face of infants and washing the feet of adults, but bravely calls both by the name of baptism. Of the mode of administering the rite, he says, “we must judge as well as we can, and, as it is left undetermined [in Scripture] it may be administered

* To assert that our Lord baptised his apostles, is flatly to contradict the apostle John, who says, “*Jesus himself baptised not.*”

according to our convenience, [sprinkling the face or washing the feet] ! The learned Prebend is so well satisfied with his own performance, that he sums up in the following self-confident appeal to his readers : “ Can more clear and satisfactory answers be required to be given to any questions that admit of a debate, than those we have been enabled to give from the Scriptures ? When—by whom—and in what manner, is baptism to be properly administered and received ? ”

It has been before admitted that some of the apostles* used water Baptism for a season, but that they did it by permission and not by commandment is evident, else Paul would not have relinquished it as he did. In the like liberty, some of the apostles advocated circumcision, not as by Christ’s command, but for their sakes who were weak in the faith, and had a conscientious regard to the law of Moses ; but afterwards, as the Gospel light began to spread in the minds of the apostles ;—Paul declared to the Galatians, “ If ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing ; ” and to the Colossians, “ If ye be dead with Christ, from the rudiments of the world ; why,

* It would appear that only three of the apostles, Peter, Philip, and Paul used water baptism, but Paul very soon laid it aside as unnecessary, and from a conviction of its dangerous tendency ; and not unlikely, but that the other apostles did so likewise, as they had the same reason for relinquishing the practice.

as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances? Touch not, taste not, handle not." Again, the same apostle writing to the Romans, says, "He is not a Jew which is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh, but he is a Jew which is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter;" hereby teaching us, that the christian religion is an inward work, and not figurative or ceremonial. Truly has it been acknowledged by a learned prelate, that "he is not a *christian* that is one outwardly, neither is that baptism which is outward in the flesh; but he is a christian who is one inwardly, *and baptism is that of the heart and not in the letter.*"*

We have the best authority for knowing, that "those things which defile a man come from the heart," and that it is "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked," hence the necessity of its being purified by the cleansing operation of Christ's baptism, "the baptism of the Holy Ghost and of fire," "he will thoroughly purge his floor and gather his wheat into the garner, but will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." It is the administration of this power of Christ in the heart, that can cleanse it from sin, and make it a fit temple for the Father, by his Holy Spirit to dwell in, which is beyond the power of water to perform, or to assist in performing.

* Archbishop Secker.

“If thine enemy hunger, feed him, if he thirst, give him drink, for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.”

This apostolic injunction, not only sets forth that christian principle laid down by the Saviour, “I say unto you, love your enemies,” but, as it appears to me, is also a lively representation of the one true baptism, and its office and operation, described as “the baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire.” Here is a divine command to one whom the Lord has prepared to do his own work, the effect of which on the corrupt nature of man will be very trying to bear, even so as by fire, to soften and melt the stony heart, that it may become a heart of flesh susceptible of divine impressions. Thus, the evil purposes of the unregenerate man, will (by the grace of God) be changed, his reprobate desires consumed, and of an enemy he will become a friend and a brother, and by submitting to this baptising power, he will become a new man—born again—the old man and his deeds will be put off, and all things become new, and all things of God.

Now, with regard to the *authorized agents* for administering the rite of water Baptism, the scripture is silent, and for a very good reason: the ordinance itself was designed to decrease, and eventually to die away. Paul declared he was not sent to baptise, but to preach. Now-a-days, preachers

assume to themselves the exclusive right of administering water Baptism, and thus they countenance a practice in the christian church, which I verily believe and feel assured, was never designed by Christ to form any part of his service. The same apostle thanked God that he had administered water Baptism to so few, for he must have perceived that this Jewish practice, which, out of condescension to the weakness of the newly converted, he had hitherto sanctioned as a mode of initiation into the church, was then operating (as now, it is to be feared) on the minds of the people very prejudicially, in settling them at rest under a useless form, and had thus become a stumbling block in their way of seeking to experience that one true baptism which can alone purify the soul, so that he could but express his thankfulness that he had been preserved from introducing more than a few into this fundamental error. Besides which, Paul was a minister of the gospel, he was not sent to administer water Baptism, but to preach.

Query. Who then is now sent to perform this ceremony? And from whence does he derive his commission? From human authority or from Divine?

It may fairly be presumed, that Paul converted by his preaching, more persons than any other of the apostles, probably, many thousands, and yet he tells us, that there were only three or four families, as he remembered, having baptised, and he was thankful

he had baptised so few, lest any should say, that he had baptised in his own name, and so imagine their salvation sure, because they had received this outward washing at the hands of so eminent a servant of Christ ; for already had some begun to call themselves after their favourite ministers, saying, “I am of Paul,” or “I am of Apollos,” or “I am of Cephas,” instead of acknowledging Christ, as their only true teacher.*

There are many other circumstances spread throughout the New Testament, which afford convincing proof that water Baptism, as also the devotional partaking of bread and wine form no part of the new covenant dispensation, which is Christ’s.

In regard to water Baptism, we have scripture testimony, as has been before remarked, that Christ himself never used it, nor do I find that he ever commanded or exhorted his followers to be baptised with water.

When he sent out the twelve as recorded by Matthew, He commanded them to preach the gospel—to heal the sick—to cleanse the lepers—to raise the dead—but not a word about baptising the people with *water*. When again, he commissioned the seventy to go forth in his name, he gave them

* And this corrupt practice is not laid aside in the present day ; as for instance, from Luther, from Calvin, and from Wesley, &c., we have Lutherans, Calvinists, and Wesleyans, &c.

particular instructions how to conduct their mission, but nothing about water Baptism. When a certain lawyer queried with him saying, "What shall I do to be saved?" and had enumerated several important principles which he professed to hold, Jesus replied, "this do and thou shalt live," but no mention of water Baptism. So of the young man that had great possessions, who put a similar question to our Lord, he replied to him, "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come and follow me ;" but water Baptism formed no part of the conditions which were to make this young man perfect.

I do not find that any of the four Evangelists who wrote the life of our Saviour, and recorded his doctrines, have any where, in their history of his life, ever referred to the subject of water Baptism as being Christ's Baptism. This popular ceremony amongst the Jews is frequently adverted to, but not a hint do I find, of Christ having acknowledged or authorized water Baptism, as an institution of his own.

When the apostles and elders, and the whole church at Jerusalem sent unto the brethren in Antioch and other places, on the question which had arisen on the necessity of circumcising the Gentile converts, they wrote letters, saying, "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us, to lay upon you no greater

burden than these necessary things," (which are there enumerated) "from which [things] if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well."* Here, we may perceive, that the burden of circumcision is not enjoined upon believers, and particularly not on Gentile christians, nor that of water Baptism or the Supper, but a pure and holy life. "No greater burden than these necessary things" were to be laid on the church of Christ. Nowhere do I find that the apostles said or intimated, that the salvation of the soul was contingent on the reception of the bread and wine, or the administration of baptism with water. We may read in the words of inspiration, the full and entire terms of salvation, but in which, baptism with water, forms no part, as for instance: "Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation, not to be repented of."—"By me," said Christ, "if any man enter in, he shall be saved."—"By grace ye are saved."—"We believe, that through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved."—"If thou confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart, that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." And in many other places, but not a word about water Baptism, or the bread and wine.

I find, in the New Testament, that our Saviour, both by example and precept, commended to his

* See Acts xiv. 23—29.

followers, charity, patience, temperance, chastity, justice, humility, and in short, (throughout his whole life) his doctrines embraced every point necessary to salvation, but nowhere do I read that he said, "Ye must be baptised with water."

Bishop Porteus on this subject, very justly puts this interrogatory. "When once Christ hath said, 'Believe, and do such and such things, and you shall be saved;' who is he that shall dare to say, 'Believe and do *more*, or you shall *not* be saved?'"

To pursue this comparative view of gospel precepts and present practice a little further, we may remark, that our Saviour forbade the use of oaths, under every and all circumstances, and enjoined on his followers, by his own example, plainness of apparel, and plainness and purity of language. He commanded his disciples to call no man master, and, consequently, no woman mistress, who did not stand in these relations to them, neither do we find he gave any other flattering titles to any one.

When he sent out his apostles to preach the gospel, he did not appoint a salary or a settled maintenance for them, but even forbade them to provide any money for their journey, neither silver, or gold, or brass; and they were commanded to preach the gospel freely without money and without price. As they had freely received the gospel from him, so were they freely to give it unto others; and on their

return, they could acknowledge, they had lacked nothing. All the provision which our Lord has made for his ministers, and which he calls the hire of the labourer, may be seen in Luke, chap. x. When he sent the seventy into every city and place to preach the gospel, they were to eat and drink such things as the people gave them on their journey ; for, said he, “the labourer is worthy of his hire.” Or, as Matthew has it, the workman is worthy of his meat. But the apostle Paul, did not always take even his food and lodging, from those amongst whom his service lay ; for he wrote to the Corinthians, that he had preached to them the gospel *freely*, and that when he was present with them, he was chargeable to no man, adding, “In all things I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and so will I keep myself.” To mention one example more, “By this,” said Christ to his followers, “shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another.” We are commanded, in plain and positive terms, not only to love one another, but to love all men, even our very enemies ; to do good to those who hate us, and pray for them who despitefully use us.

This command of our Lord is imperative, and positively forbids all war, whether defensive or offensive, for, it is self-evident, if a man love his enemies, he cannot desire to injure them, much less, to slay them. “My kingdom,” said Christ, “is not

of this world ; if it were, then would my disciples fight," ergo, "those who are truly my disciples, *cannot* fight." All these doctrines and examples of Christ, are so evidently designed and calculated to improve the condition of mankind, both temporal and spiritual, that they necessarily form a part of christianity, as being of its very nature and essence, and therefore, they cannot be disregarded by those who really desire to follow Christ, as their guide and exemplar. Is it not then, marvellously inconsistent, that these important obligations should be so lightly esteemed, or set at nought, by most of those who profess to be of Christ's church, whilst, at the same time, they are ready to "bite and devour one another," about a few outward ceremonies which cannot possibly mend the heart, or improve the state of humanity ?

"People," said Rowland Hill, "dwell too much upon the fringes and phylacteries of religion, instead of laying due stress upon religion itself, and this is one reason why we do not agree as we ought." The apostle Paul, in writing to the Hebrews, regarding the first tabernacle, into which their priests entered, to accomplish the service of God according to the law of Moses, says, that the service of that tabernacle "stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings and carnal ordinances imposed on the people, *until the time of reformation.*" If then, the time of reformation be come, then all their carnal ordinances must

accordingly cease to be imposed upon us. That, which in the apostle's days, was accounted a carnal ordinance, cannot now be made a spiritual ordinance, but must remain a carnal ordinance still. That which was then water is but water now, and can only be available to putting away the filth of the flesh, but not to insure the answer of a good conscience towards God. The apostle Peter, in his first general epistle to the christian churches, has informed us, first,—what is *not* baptism, “It is *not*,” he says, “the putting away the filth of the flesh;” but, a washing with water, is the putting away the filth of the flesh, therefore, the one true baptism is not water Baptism. Secondly,—the same apostle informs us, in a few words, what baptism really is, viz., “The answer of a good conscience towards God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.” Seeing, then, that water has no power, in what form soever administered, to produce this state of the regenerate man, but, that the baptism of Christ, described as “the baptism of the Holy Ghost and of fire,” can alone effect this change, by purifying the corrupt heart, it follows, that this only is the baptism which now saveth, and that of itself, without the aid of any outward ceremony, however piously performed.

In concluding this part of his subject, the writer submits to the candid consideration of those who differ from his views, the following brief summary of scriptural facts ;—

1. There is one Lord, one faith, and one baptism—and only one.

2. The one true saving baptism, is not outward, but spiritual; “he (Christ) shall baptise you with the Holy Ghost,” that is, the Holy Spirit—this is *the one baptism*, and there is no other.

3. Christ never baptised with water, neither did he ever recognize water Baptism as *his* baptism, or command his disciples to baptise with *water*.

4. But he did command his disciples to go and baptise all nations, and they went forth and baptised with *the Holy Ghost*, therein fulfilling their Lord’s command.

5. Baptism with water was a customary mode of admitting proselytes among the Jews, and some of the apostles adopted it for a season, as they found it practised by their countrymen.

6. Both the Jews and likewise the apostles, baptised their converts with water—but not the offspring of converted persons.

7. The apostle Peter, at one period, advocated circumcision, and he also administered the rite of water Baptism, to those who had been converted to christianity; but afterwards, he acknowledged that “the baptism which doth now save us, is not the putting away the filth of the flesh [*i. e.* by the agency of water] but the answer of a good conscience toward God,” which Christ’s cleansing, purifying baptism can alone produce.

8. The apostle Paul also commenced his ministry with administering water Baptism to his converts, but he quickly abandoned the practice; whereas, had it been an institution of Christ's own appointing, we can hardly conceive, he would have laid it aside. No doubt the apostle found that its tendency was to produce serious error, in the minds of those who, being weak in the faith, were disposed to depend on outward and ceremonial rites, and to believe *that* to be baptism which was outward in the flesh, whereas the one true baptism is inward and spiritual, that is, as he has described it in his letter to Titus, "the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost."

ON THE LORD'S SUPPER.

“ And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life ; he that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.” “ He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.” “ Behold, I stand at the door and knock ; if any man hear my voice and will open to me the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me.” “ Blessed are those servants, who, when their Lord cometh, he shall find watching ; verily, I say unto you, he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.” This spake He of the Spirit.

“ Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the Passover must be killed ; and Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, ‘ Go and prepare us the Passover, that we may eat.’ ”

“ The same night he took bread, and when he had given thanks he brake it, and said, Take, eat : this is my body which is broken for you, this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also, he took the cup when he had supped, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood ; this do ye (as oft as ye drink it) in remembrance of me.”

This account of the last supper, as given to the Corinthians by the apostle Paul, is, in substance, the

same as that recorded by Matthew, Mark and Luke. It may, however, be remarked, that the words, "This do in remembrance of me," are not mentioned by Matthew or by Mark, and, what is more extraordinary, the apostle John, who was present, and has given, by far, a larger and more circumstantial account than any other of the sacred historians, of what took place on that interesting occasion, does not so much as notice that bread and wine were on the table, notwithstanding his narrative runs through no less than five chapters of his book. Had this provision of bread and wine been new or unusual, he would scarcely have omitted to mention it. Nor do we find in John's three epistles, or in his letters to the seven churches of Asia, any mention whatever of the supper. The simple historical fact, given by the other evangelists, of there being bread and wine (as is customary, at such meetings of the Jews), with the words used by our Lord, as master of the feast, are so briefly and passingly noticed by them, that it seems quite impossible for me to make out a new ordinance as being established by Christ, for the future and imperative observance of his church. If any new rite, or any old one, had been appointed by Christ to be of perpetual obligation to his followers, the apostle John, his bosom friend and companion, must have been fully aware of it, and it is hard to conceive, had this been so, how he could have so

silently passed by so momentous a subject, in his history of our Saviour's life, or in his three epistles, or in his seven letters to the Asiatic churches, replete as they are with counsel and instruction, reproof and encouragement.*

Again, when the apostle Paul, that great disciplinarian of the newly gathered churches, addressed his two epistles to Timothy, he makes no mention whatever of the Supper or of water Baptism. Had these ordinances really been instituted by Christ to be observed in his church, this, perhaps, is the very place where we should be induced to look for information respecting them. Their authority, utility and manner of administration we would naturally expect to find in such a document, and laid down with such clearness and precision, that all might understand, and no one misunderstand, as their paramount importance would have demanded. In two lengthy and discursive epistles like these, written by an experienced apostle to a young minister of the gospel, for the very purpose of instructing him in the several duties of his office in a distant church, over which he was called to be an overseer, one thinks, would be the very opportunity to have advised him

* The like absence of all allusion, much less of information or instruction, in these epistles and letters of John, may also be observed regarding water Baptism, as well as the Supper. He frequently calls to repentance and amendment of life, but not to the observance of any outward ceremony.

regarding the necessity and administration of these important ordinances, had such been instituted, whereas not a word does the apostle say to his "dearly beloved son" on these subjects, and the like silence he observes in his epistle to Titus—to him however, he does state what Christ's baptism is, *i. e.* "the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." Dr. MacKnight observes, that "the Epistles of Paul to Timothy and Titus, taken together, contain a *full account* of the qualifications and duties of ministers of the gospel, and may be considered as a *complete body* of divinely inspired canons, to be observed by the christian clergy of all communions, to the end of the world." This learned theologian would hardly have admitted so much, had he considered the administering of the sacraments as forming an essential part of the duties of ministers of the gospel, seeing that they are not included in the said "complete body of divinely inspired canons."

If we look at the facts of the case regarding the supper, all this paucity of information in some of the apostle's writings, and the total silence on the subject in others, may be satisfactorily accounted for.

When our Lord and his twelve companions sat down to table, in a room made ready for the occasion, it was, as they well knew, to partake of a national feast, in celebration of an event, which they, as Jews, had been accustomed to observe with the same formalities as their forefathers had done before them.

They were no strangers to the manner of eating the passover, nor to the forms which would be observed at the supper, that was immediately to follow.

This occasion which our Lord embraced of improving the opportunity, by referring to the solemn event which he foreknew was just at hand, does not appear to have called forth any comment of the sacred historians beyond a simple record of his words, varied as they were to accord with that particular circumstance ; so nearly did the form observed, resemble that which they had been accustomed to witness at their usual evening meal.

From the facts on record, it is reasonable to conclude that no new rite or ordinance was instituted by our Lord on that occasion, but the observance of an old established custom among the Jews ; had it been otherwise, the Evangelists would hardly have refrained from recording so important an era. The same ceremonial acts were used at our Lord's table as were then, at that very time, observed in almost every family of Jews in the city of Jerusalem.

R. H. Herschell, who had his education among that people, says :—that, at the Jews' supper “two large cups are filled with wine : one of these is taken by the master of the house, and a blessing is pronounced, after which, the head of the family gives the cup to all those sitting round, he then brings forth the hidden cake and distributes a piece to each ;” and in the work of the religious Tract Society,

on "The Manners and Customs of the Jews," it is remarked that "this custom of the modern Jews, after the practice of their forefathers, strongly reminds us of what passed at the last supper."

Alexander Cruden on the Psalmist's words—"I will take the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord," observes, that "It is a phrase taken from the common practice of the Jews in their thankofferings." "And among other rites, the master of the feast took a cup of wine into his hand, and solemnly blessed God for it, and for the mercy which was then acknowledged, and then gave it to all the guests, of which every one did drink in his turn."—Cruden goes on to say—"To which custom it is supposed, our blessed Lord alludes in the institution of the cup, which is also called the cup of blessing."—But how that can be called an institution of our Lord, which had been practised for so many generations before his appearance on earth, is hard to believe. Hyam Isaacs, a converted Jew, in his account of Jewish ceremonies, asserts that, "The same custom of blessing both what was to be eaten, and what was to be drunk, was transmitted from the Jews to the assemblies of christians." It is more than probable, that our Saviour himself observed this national custom of devotion, at all *ordinary* meals as well as at his last supper, to which he then introduced some remarks suited to that very solemn opportunity.

When in the wilderness we read, that he pronounced a blessing on breaking the bread and distributing it to the multitude then assembled—so likewise Paul, when suffering shipwreck on the coast of Malta, besought his companions after their long fasting, to take some refreshment, “and when he had thus spoken he took bread, and gave thanks to God, in presence of them all, and when he had broken it, he began to eat.”—According to Hyam Isaacs—“The benedictions which our Lord pronounced on the bread and wine, separately, at the celebration of his last supper, are related with the very same circumstances as are to be met with in the Jewish rituals.”

When the children of Israel sacrificed peace offerings of oxen to the Lord, it is recorded, that Moses took a basin of blood which he sprinkled on the people and said, “Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you.” The master of the family among the Jews, uses the following words at the Paschal Feast, besides other forms. “This is the passover of the destroying angel”—“These are the bitter herbs which our fathers ate in the wilderness.”—“This is the bread of affliction which our fathers have eaten;” and our blessed Lord at the passover supper, saw meet to use a similar form, but in other words, suited to the peculiar circumstances of himself and his guests.—“This is my body,”—“This is my blood,” &c. And

he commanded them, his disciples, who were at table with him, to remember him so often as they should observe these Jewish customs at their meals ; but his discourse evidently had reference to them only, and not to his church, which should afterward be established of Jews and Gentiles, brought out from superstition and idolatry, to worship God, not with men's hands as heretofore, but in spirit and in truth. In referring to his disciples partaking of the refreshments then before them, the words of our Lord—"This do ye as oft as ye drink it," were evidently directed to them, his immediate companions, being Jews, and not as an example to be followed by the future converts to the christian church.

It seems clear, that the manner of giving out the bread and wine by our Lord to those present, was the usual practice of the Jews at their meals, and especially on the evening of the passover ; and not then adopted for the first time, nor directed as a new rite to be observed by his church, in time to come.

The learned Dr. Macknight observes, (whilst however advocating the continuance of this custom amongst christians,) that "the passover solemnity was usually concluded with eating a little bread, and drinking a cup of wine. Jesus therefore," he adds, "did not appoint any new rite, but appropriated an old one to a new purpose." Thus giving it, as his

judgment, that the custom was of the Jews, and not a new ordinance of Christ's appointing ; and in this opinion, many pious and learned men concur. The practice of the Jews in the present day, is after the same manner, so that it is worthy of admiration that this people should have followed their ancient forms and ceremonies through so many generations, with so little variation.

When J. H. D. Hay was travelling, a few years ago, in Barbary, he lodged at the house of a Jew, at Laraiche ; and his host being a Rabbi, he observed that he went through the usual forms and prayers of the Jews, in cutting [or breaking] bread, and pouring out the wine, both in sitting down and on rising up. More recently, when R. H. Herschell was in Palestine, being at Tiberius, close to the lake of that name, he heard in every direction, the Jews pronouncing the prayer on the cup of blessing, at their evening meal. From these observations, it may be seen, that the practice of observing a religious ceremony at their meals, had been (and is now) in use among the Jews, for many generations to the time of our Saviour and his apostles, by whom it was followed in point of form. Afterwards, (with other customs, in a new dress, borrowed from Gentiles as well as Jews) it was introduced into the christian church, and no doubt from this custom arose also the

present practice of what is improperly called, "Saying of Grace," before and after meals.*

It was a peculiar mode of teaching that our Lord observed on many occasions, as well as at his last supper, to convey instruction to his hearers, from passing events, by a symbolical reference to the thing signified, drawn at the time as a text from objects before him, or from circumstances in which he happened to be placed; a few instances may be sufficient to show this.

When our Lord first saw Peter and his brother Andrew, who were fishermen, casting a net into the sea, he said unto them, "Follow me and I will make you fishers of men;" thereby intimating, that he would empower them to convert men from superstition and idolatry to the true faith. As he sat on

* Let it not be said the writer is opposed to offering thanks at meals; his scruple is against using a set form of words prepared beforehand, for such occasions, too often a mere image of man's making, without life or feeling. He is nevertheless fully sensible of the duty we owe to the Divine giver of every blessing, of rendering to him the tribute of uplifted grateful hearts in humble acknowledgment, not only for the food we eat, but at other seasons also, for the manifold gifts which, in his mercy, he daily bestows upon us. The christian's walk should be a *life* of thanksgiving and prayer. "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or *whatsoever ye do*, do all to the glory of God." "Pray without ceasing, and in everything give thanks." These injunctions of the apostle Paul do not necessarily imply a vocal thanksgiving, but God looketh at the heart.

Jacob's well, and a woman of Samária came to draw water, he took that opportunity to bid her ask of him living water, that is, the purifying and refreshing influence of his Holy Spirit. At another time, one of the company present, desired him to interfere about some disputed property, and speak to his brother that he might divide the inheritance with him. On this, our Lord warned the people present, to beware of covetousness, "for," said he, "a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." Once, when his disciples had forgotten to take bread, our Lord cautioned them to beware of the leaven (one of the necessary ingredients in making bread) of the pharisees and sadducees, that is, of their doctrine. Being with his disciples on one occasion, surrounded by a great press of people, it was told him, "Thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee,"—when our Lord, pointing to his disciples, said, "Behold my mother and my brethren, for whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother and my sister, and my mother;" hereby teaching us, from that incidental circumstance, that he is united to those who submit to his government, by stronger ties than those of nature. Had our Lord spoken in this instance, of individuals, his language would have been, "This is my brother,"—"This is my sister,"—"This is my mother,"—so, when he partook of the

last supper with his disciples, he still adopted the same mode and manner of teaching, by referring to the bread and wine then on the table. "This is my body"—"This is my blood,"—by these expressions, he directed their attention to the approaching solemn event, when his body should be broken, as bread ; and his blood be shed, as wine, for the remission of sins, that whosoever believes in him and is baptised into his spirit shall not perish, but have everlasting life. As though he had said, "He that dwelleth in me, and I in him, it is, that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood." This appears to be the true communion of the Lord's Supper.

Now it seems very clear, that in all these instances as well as at many other times, our Lord designed to establish some great principles in his church, which should subserve the cause of truth and righteousness on the earth, not to be formally acted and represented by outward rites and ceremonies, but to purify the heart and regulate the conduct toward God and man. It must be difficult for any unprejudiced mind, who carefully observes what is recorded of this interesting opportunity which our Lord had with his disciples, and all the circumstances under which it occurred, satisfactorily to discover anything which implies the institution of any outward ordinance, or the appointing an old one to a new purpose, to be observed in his church.

Our Lord's injunction to his disciples, to wash each other's feet, appears to have been far more imperative and binding, as an ordinance, than any thing which his words at the supper table imply, but this emblem of condescension and love, no one, in this day, considers himself bound to practice.*

In the one case, our Lord's words are, "If I, then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, *ye ought also to wash each other's feet, for I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you.*" Of the bread, when he had given thanks, he said, "*Take, eat, this is my body, which is broken for you, this do in remembrance of me.*" After the same manner, he took the cup, saying, "*This cup is the New Testament in my blood, this do ye (as oft as you drink it) in remembrance of me.*" If the command to wash each other's feet was intended to be literally fulfilled, it must have been to his disciples only, but the instructive moral applies to all. So also, with regard to the bread and wine, it was imperative on his disciples, being Jēws, so often as they partook thereof, after their national and accustomed manner, to do it in remembrance of him ; to us it is, *at all times*, a subject for reverent and grateful recollection.

* Except, perhaps, the Bishop of Rome, who, it is said, has an annual ceremony, at which he publicly performs this operation on the feet of a certain number of pilgrims, in token of his humility, and as fulfilling the command of Christ.

It is recorded of Paul, that being, in course of his travels, at Troas: "Upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, he preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow." This has been called, "celebrating the Lord's Supper."* It appears, by the context, that his preaching preceded the breaking of bread, for it is said, "when he had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, he departed" on his journey. Surely, there is nothing in this account to indicate the observing a new rite, called the Lord's Supper, of bread and wine, but merely the following out of an established practice of the Jews meeting together to take their food; or, as it was usually termed, to break bread together. There is no doubt, although not so recorded, that Paul, on this occasion, as at other times, observed his own injunction,—“Whether ye eat, or drink, or whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God,” and that the breaking of bread at supper of this company of disciples, was accompanied by the usual thanksgiving. There is no mention of wine here, although it is probable it was used, as being the customary beverage of the country; but even admitting this, the evidence fails in proving, that this breaking of bread, was anything more than a Jewish meal, and conducted after their manner:—

* See heading to Acts xx.

After Paul had been three days as a prisoner at Rome, he called the chief of the Jews together, and declared unto them, that he "had committed nothing contrary to the customs of the fathers, or against the people of the Jews," by which it would appear, he had not then personally relinquished all the forms and ceremonies of the Jewish ritual, nor, probably, the traditions of the elders, having been brought up after their strictest manner. Supposing, however, but not admitted,* that it could be shown, that one or more of the early christian churches, and even some of the apostles themselves, did actually celebrate what they might call by the name of "the Lord's Supper," in which a morsel of bread and a cup of wine was administered to those assembled, as a devotional act, even this of itself, would not establish the fact, that it was, therefore, an ordinance of our Saviour's appointing.

The strongest argument for the use of the bread and wine, and that on which its advocates most insist, appears to be drawn from the eleventh chapter of Paul's second Epistle to the Corinthians.

The object of Paul in writing that chapter of his

* The church of Corinth may be cited as an instance adverse to this opinion ; but whatever the eating and drinking referred to might be called, it is evident that it was disgraceful to the church of Christ, as they practised it, but the apostle told them "this is not to eat the Lord's supper," and he severely reprimanded them for their disorderly conduct therein.

epistle to the Corinthians is principally, to reprove them for their riotous behaviour when assembled together publicly to break bread; he does not commend them for observing this feast, or recommend them to continue it, and had they conducted it with common decency, it is probable no more notice would have been taken of it by the apostle, than he has done in his epistles to the Galatians, and Ephesians, and other churches, where the subject is scarcely adverted to. It is clear, however, that such a practice obtained in the church of Corinth, but the apostle told them "this is not to eat the Lord's Supper," he then goes on to inform them, in what manner the Lord's last supper with his disciples *was* conducted, enjoining every man who should commemorate the Lord's Supper, to examine himself that he do it worthily. "*As often,*" said he, "as ye eat this bread and drink this cup,"—" *whosoever* shall eat this bread and drink this cup." These expressions of Paul can hardly be construed to mean a command or an injunction to partake of the supper, but to show to the Corinthians how it was to be conducted, *so often* as they should continue the practice which they had adopted.

There is evidence for believing that this supper of the Corinthian church, was afterwards known as a "love feast," and became in general use among the early christians. It is mentioned by Tertullian, as being

observed in his time, (A.D. 200), as a social festival, with the view of "cultivating mutual affection and friendly intercourse with each other," but in the case at Corinth it was sadly perverted.

This supper, or feast, or breaking of bread together, is probably alluded to in Acts ii. 46, and again in Jude, verse 12, where the apostle reproves some of the guests for their misconduct, as being "spots in your feasts of charity when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear." And it is worthy of remark, that whenever this meal, or supper, is hinted at in the New Testament as a commemorative feast, it is represented as being reproachfully conducted by those who partook of it; so that the chapter in the apostle's letter to the Corinthian church, was no doubt designed to hold forth reproof and warning to them on this subject, but not as an example for others to imitate, or even encouragement to *them* to continue the practice, but nevertheless they were left by him at their liberty, only to be used with decency. But it is not within the scope of my design to attempt to account for all which the apostles did, or allowed to be done, under the peculiar circumstances in which they were placed, in order to gain and conciliate their new converts. By the sudden transition of such a multitude of persons whom the apostles converted from Paganism and from Judaism to the christian faith, they were constrained, no doubt, to

lead gently along, many amongst the new converts who had strong prejudices in favour of retaining some, at least, of their accustomed forms and ceremonies, or were desirous of imitating others in these things ; and not to insist on their laying aside at once, all those customs they had been in the practice of observing.

This is obvious, from Paul's acknowledgment to the Corinthian church, "Unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews."—"To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak."

To flee from idolatry, and to live a pure and holy life, was the substance of what the apostles deemed it needful to enjoin upon the first converts. "It seemed," say they in their letter to the church at Antioch, "good to the Holy Ghost and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things, That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled and from fornication, from which if ye keep yourselves ye shall do well."

But when all is said, that can be said, Jesus Christ (not the apostles, holy men as they were) is the alone High Priest of our profession ; and, (if I may, without offence,) I would say, it is for us to hear what he, by his Spirit says to the churches, and this will be found to be in unison with holy scripture, in which are some things hard to be understood, yet these are stumbling blocks to those

only, who desire to bend its pure and holy precepts and principles to their own preconceived opinions. There is sufficient therein clear, even to the way-faring man, by taking heed to which, he may walk acceptably before God. "The humble believer will read with faith, that which is hard to be understood, receive with gratitude, that which is clearly made known, and wait with patience, until that which is perfect being come, that which is in part will be done away."

And here the writer would take the opportunity (although he has thus stated his views) to acknowledge his belief, that serious pious christians may sometimes have had their minds profitably impressed and comforted at the time of their partaking of the bread and wine of the Eucharist, whilst, however it is to be feared, that the greater number of participants receive it only as a form, or what is more to be lamented, as imagining they are thereby made more fit for the kingdom of heaven. In thus freely conceding that some pious individuals do receive spiritual nourishment to their souls, when participating in this rite ; the writer at the same time, has no doubt that at *other* seasons they would be equally benefited, when their minds were similarly occupied in contemplating, apart from every worldly consideration, the boundless love of God in his having sent his own Son into the world to become a propitiatory sacrifice for their

sins, to be bruised for their iniquities, that by coming to him, they might be healed of all their spiritual maladies, "they who draw nigh to God, he will draw nigh to them."* But, that the intervention of bread and wine, has any virtue or power whatever, in producing these profitable impressions on the minds of the participants, he decidedly dissents. If the communicants in this symbolical rite, do really experience thereby, as they assert, a union and communion of the Holy Spirit with their spirit, how much greater benefit ought the apostles themselves to have received, who ate and drank with our Lord himself, at his last supper, and were present with him as guests, at the same table ; but the scripture does not give evidence of any such benefit afforded to them from having been thus favoured, far otherwise.

We read, that immediately after partaking of the bread and wine, one of them went out and betrayed his master for thirty pieces of silver ; another, for fear of reproach, denied (with an oath,) that he had any knowledge of him, or had any connexion with Christ. And, when their Lord was seized by his enemies, "all his disciples forsook him and fled." Now, as all these, had very recently partaken of bread and wine with their Lord and master, it is very clear, the effects thereof did not preserve them in faith-

* James iv. 8.

fulness to him and his cause ; and what more ought we to expect from the mere ceremonial representation of the supper now, in the year of our Lord, 1846.

In estimating the visible effects of this superelegant rite on the Christian life and character, the writer is compelled to believe, that its observance in the several churches of christendom, is calculated to produce and has produced, as history abundantly testifies, a great amount of error and consequently of evil, without any mixture of good, either to the church at large, or to the individuals themselves.

The true communion of the body and blood of Christ is not a participating in outward bread and wine. To appoint a particular day at intervals, longer or shorter, for enjoying communion with God, is calculated to abridge the privileges designed by the great head for the living members of his church. The support of the spiritual life is *daily* bread, a being nourished by Christ, with that living bread which comes down from heaven, and refreshed by living water, which he alone can bestow.

Although the Corinthians had both bread and wine, and were baptised with water, yet the apostle tells them to examine themselves, and prove their own selves, how that Jesus Christ was in them, except they were reprobates. Now, if he was in them, what need of bread and wine, to put them in remembrance of him and his death, for whosoever hath HIM, hath the

substance, so that it is clear, people may eat bread and drink wine, and go into the water, and still be reprobate, if Christ, by his Holy Spirit, be not in them ; and it is *as* clear, that Christ, the substance of things not seen, may be in the believers, notwithstanding they may never have felt it to be obligatory or expedient for them to participate in these outward ceremonies.

The Church of England admits “if by reason of extremity of sickness, or by any other just impediment, the sick man is prevented from receiving the bread and wine.” “If he do truly repent him of his sins, and stedfastly believe that Jesus Christ hath suffered death upon the cross for him, and shed his blood for his redemption, earnestly remembering the benefits he hath thereby, and giving him hearty thanks, that *therefore*, he doth eat and drink the body and blood of our Saviour Christ, profitably to his soul's health, although he do not receive the sacrament with his mouth.” This expedient fully admits a spiritual communion with Christ without the medium of bread and wine. If not needful to the sick man, its necessity is very much weakened in the case of any other, and more particularly of those who have no confidence in its efficacy.

“He,” saith Christ, “that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me and I in him.” So that the true communion of the Lord's Supper is to

dwell in Christ, these do feed upon Christ spiritually, and do witness him to be in them as their only hope of glory. By, and through this spiritual communion, the church of Christ is baptised into one body—Christ and his church are united, the Lamb of God and the bride the Lamb's wife, are no longer twain but one body, each member being a part of that body of which Christ is the head—He the true vine, and they the living branches, living and bearing fruit, because abiding in him. “Truly our fellowship (our union and communion) is with the Father, through his Son Jesus Christ. Hereby we know that we dwell in him and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.”

He is still standing at the door of the heart, and desiring to enter. Those who hear his voice and open to him the door, he will come in to them and sup with them, and they with him. To experience this inward and spiritual communion, is to participate in the Lord's Supper really and truly; and “blessed are those servants, who, when their Lord cometh, he shall find watching, for verily he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them,” not with outward bread and wine, but by his “inward and spiritual grace” in their souls, to their comfort and edification, and eventually, through faith and obedience, to everlasting life.



